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Atari Online News, Etc.
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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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Ugh, I feel miserable! I'll still maintain that I'm glad that Spring is here, but with it come colds and allergies. I think I've got one or the other. Hopefully, this will pass soon.

I came across a couple of articles/commentaries this week which I've included in this issue. One pertains to the numerous hoaxes and mischief carried on via e-mail every day; and the other pertains to the "sloppiness' of e-mail writers. Both just happen to be online pet peeves of mine. You knew I was going to say that!

What do I mean by hoaxes and mischief via e-mail? Ever get the e-mail that tells you Kentucky Fried Chicken changed its name to KFC because they don't sell real chicken, and therefore couldn't use the word "chicken" in its advertising? Or, the one that tells you to send this e-mail to 10 friends and Microsoft will automatically track it and send you money? Oh, there are hundreds of different examples. Some of them sound so plausible that you are very tempted to believe them. Pure and simple, it's another form of spam! And what's worse is that these messages are usually tenth-generation messages that are being forwarded to you. Not only do you have to read this stuff (when you choose to do so), but you have to wade through 10 sets of message headers and mail recipient addresses before you even get to the message itself! And how many times have you received the same message over and over again? And to think people actually believe some of these things! People are so gullible when they don't understand something; and they keep perpetuating this madness.

And how about sloppy e-mail? Egads! People just don't take the time to write well. And the misspelled and misused words! Typos are one thing; and they happen. But when every other word is either spelled incorrectly; or the wrong word (usually an antonym) is used, it drives me bonkers! Are people just plain lazy; or do they really not know how to spell? I'm guessing that it's a little bit of both!

In past years, we've usually had an April Fools story. Well, it just isn't going to happen this year. We promise to make up for it in the coming years! And remember, this weekend marks the arrival of Daylight Savings Time. Don't forget to set your clocks forward one hours Sunday morning. Blast, I hate losing that hour of sleep!

Until next time...

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. It's time once again to see what's going on over on the UseNet, but first you've got to sit through one of my little missives on whatever I decide to babble on about. Let's see... I think this week it'll be about being "left behind".

When I was in early grade school, one of my best friends was "left behind" when the rest of us moved on to the next grade. The rest of us didn't think much about it, but he was devastated. His biggest fear wasn't that he was dumb, or that he'd be trying to catch up the rest of his life. His biggest fear was that he'd lose touch with his friends.

None of those things came to pass, by the way. We all stayed friends, and Dan is now Vice President at an Internet Service Provider. We never lost touch, he wasn't dumb, and didn't spend a lot of time catching up. He just needed a little more time than the rest of us.

Seeing Dan the other day made me stop and think about other times that we might worry about being left behind. I can remember back when I didn't have any computers that weren't Atari.

Sure, I saw the handwriting on the wall. I knew that when I needed another computer that it wouldn't be an Atari, since Atari is no more. But I'd spent so much time with TOS and MagiC and all the friends that I've made over the past almost fifteen years that the thought of losing touch with them really made me kind of ill. The Connecticut AtariFests, Asheville, Boston, Users' Group meetings, and the hours spent every week chatting with other Atari users online have become quite a part of what I am now. I didn't want to leave all that behind.

Oh sure, you can say "that won't happen to us", but we've all said that and had it happen anyway. While I still use my Atari, I don't use it exclusively. I was afraid that I'd get slowly but surely sucked away from my TT and Stacy toward that Intel monstrosity. Fortunately that hasn't happened to me. I have, however, seen it happen to others. It's always made me feel sad when I've seen those I've known for so long move on to another platform. Not so much because I was "dumb" for staying with Atari, or because if I didn't move along with them I'd be trying to catch up for the rest of my life, but because I'd lose touch with my friends. Well, I've been using my own Intel-based PC for almost a year now and I'm proud to report that I'm still in touch with my friends in the Atari world. Heck, I've even made some new ones.

The PC? That's just hardware. It's the people that I'll always remember the most.

Now let's get on with all the stuff from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

Chris Swinson asks for help with a hard drive for his Falcon:

"I have IDE driver 6.06 and I want to use a 1.5gig 2.5" ide drive, problem is my Falcon does not like it and won't format it. If I upgrade to the V7 driver will that maybe work ?"

Kevin Dermott tells Chris:

"Generally you don't need to format IDE's just partition them."

Chris replies:

"Usually yes, but I can’t partition it unless its formatted."

Kevin tells Chris:

"Most are built "formatted" and can only be partitioned and some say formatting can ruin the drive. Also are you sure of the ID 0/1?"

Claes Holmerup adds:

"Do you refer to AHDI 6.06? In that case, just don’t try any more. AHDI can’t handle IDE’s larger than 1GB if I remember correctly. Get Uwe Seimet’s HDDriver instead and it’ll do the magic..."

Edward Baiz gives us this little heads-up:

"If any Atari owners want a good solid audio CD player program, then I recommend PlayMyCD from Alain Larrode. I just received my registered version and I am impressed with it’s looks and performance. It sure beat Alexander Clauss’s version. D/l the demo (English and French) at the following site:

http://www.chez.com/lrd/

Martin Byttebier tells Edward:

"Good and solid it is but I found that with my setup CD-player slows down the reaction of other programs. For instance deleting text by means of the [delete] key doesn’t happen fluently. Sometimes there is a brief delay.

I also notice that something constantly is accessing my HD even if there is no CD inserted. Hm, this reminds me of the problems I’ve had with animated gif’s in Cab.

Right now I use a non-patched novaVDI 2.67. Let me see.....
Even with a patched version of novaVDI my HD is accessed by ???
Strange.

I do like PlayMyCD but due the above described problems I don’t use it anymore. Alexander Clauss’s version works just great here."

John Garone asks about CAB and cookies:

"9 out of 10 CAB cookie expire dates are 1 JAN 1970! The remaining dates are past 1 JAN 2000. General.cpx has correct date and I have’nt had a Y2K date problem (unless this is one). Dates on files in windows on my stock Falcon MKI (14 meg) desktop show correctly! Any thoughts?"

James Smith tells John:

"I suspect that you are using one of the new OVL files from Dan Ackerman? This has been mentioned to him so he is aware of it. You can expect it to be sorted out shortly."

John replies:

"Thanks. I wonder how far can CAB be improved/optimized via the OVL? "No day off" for Dan (OR Oliver)! A big thanks to both for their work!!!"

Pascal Ricard adds:

"I'm not absolutely sure of this but I think it has something to do more with Cab itself than with the ovl."

Dan Ackerman tells Pascal:

"No, the problem is with my OVL. I need to sort it out, but have put it down on the list as a working cookie seemed better than a non working cookie. I'll try to move it up the list and get it fixed. It shouldn't be all that bad."

Stephen Barszczak asks for help with Gemulator:

"I'm having a problem with Gemulator and the date, is there anyway to stop Gemulator from resetting my PC's date to 1989, as it is causing no end of problems with Windows every time I run it.

I was hoping to be able to use my SCSI HD drive that have all my Atari software installed, but until the date problem can be sorted out all its doing is gathering dust."

Nicholas Bales tells Stephen:

"What version of Gemulator and TOS are you using? The latest freeware version works perfectly well here with TOS 2.06, and I haven't noticed any date glitches.

As far as I know, using your Atari hard drive isn't possible unless you partitioned the drive with BigDos or HD Driver beforehand. Windows can't read standard TOS partitions, regardless of the SCSI interface."

Lance Ringquist asks for CD-ROM help:

"I have a mega 4,and a nec single speed drive,i hooked it up with a host adaptor from b&c,also i installed extend dos gold on my mega filer 30. I created a drive p.

Now my problem is that I turn on my mega filer, then the cd-rom,then I turn on my mega, and the cd spins but the busy light does not go on, and I get no desk top, just a green screen with the pointer.

If I turn off my computer,then the cd-rom spins, and the busy light comes on. If I unplug the cd-rom from the hard drive, then reboot, I get the filers desktop, then I replug in the cd-rom, click on the cd-rom drive and I get a error, no device found. Please help. This is my first real foray into the ST. I am a old 8-bitter used to plug and play."

Derryck Croker tells Lance:

"Hints - each device must have its own SCSI ID, only one SCSI device should have termination, and that must be the last one in the chain."

Greg Goodwin adds:

"The NEC-25 has a DIP switch for termination. The problem is (at least on mine) that the DIP switch DOESN'T WORK! A pass through terminator (~$10) solved the problem nicely after many hours of frustration."

Our friend Rob Mahlert at Atari-Users Network posts:

"Atari Users Network (www.atari-users.net) has just added a Classified Ads and an Auction Section. Both Sections SHOULD work with Cab.

Stop by and check it out!
http://www.atari-users.net

We also have a Webring, Banner Exchange, Forum, Chat Room, File Area, Links Engine and Web based E-Mail."

Andrew Robinson asks about floppy read/write problems:

"Has anyone ever had problems with their ST diskette drive becoming un-reliable as the computer gets older? Is there any kind of drive cleaning kit still available?"

My pal Sheldon Winick tells Andrew:

"If you should need a new floppy drive, I have one NEW disk drive still in stock for the Atari system, complete with Atari's custom faceplate to make installation a simple swap if your system has the narrow style faceplate that Atari used during their last several years of production (grey faceplate with the rectangular shaped opening, not the trapezoidal shape). If you need the drive, its closeout priced at $29 plus $4.30 for Priority Mail shipping within the continental U.S. Email me at s.winick@worldnet.att.net if interested.

By the way, the drive is actually an Epson SMD-380 with the custom Atari faceplate, which is the DS/DD drive Atari used during the final few years of production."

> One thing that no one thought to mention is that it might not be the drive itself, but the shifter chip. It's been my experience that if the shifter chip needs to be reseated, it can affect the floppy's read/write reliability. Reseating the chip is both easier and cheaper than buying and installing a new floppy drive.
>
> -joe

Well folks, that's it for this week. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Game Makers Sue Yahoo! 'Tomb Raider'! 'Hogs of War'! 'Gauntlet Legends'! New 'Resident Evil'! 'Time Stalker'! And much more!

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Infogrames North America, Inc. Sends Swine Into the Trenches in Hogs of War for Sony Playstation

And you thought pigs couldn't fly...ha!

Infogrames North America, Inc. officially announced today that Hogs of War, the only game where pigs are clad in Army uniforms, is coming to the Sony PlayStation this summer. Join the British, French, American, German, Japanese, and Russian armies in a hilarious all-out fight to the finish!

Hog World is at war. Six mighty nations are struggling to overpower each other in the pursuit of territorial and technological gains. Players are thrown into a massive 3D battlefield with an army of three to six maniacal oinkers armed with an arsenal of debilitating weapons.

Limited by time, players must quickly use their keen wits and cunning abilities to pummel their opponent before the game automatically switches to the next team, leaving them at the mercy of their adversary. The game features single and multi-player modes, allowing gamers to play alone or to execute diabolical moves against their friends.

An added bonus to the pork fighting mayhem is a level generator, which enables players to produce an endless number of levels, creating hours and hours of ridiculous pig-battling fun.

''Hogs of War is a fun, furious and frenetic turn-based combat strategy game that will appeal to hard-core gamers and casual gamers alike," said David Riley, marketing director for Infogrames North America Inc.'s Action/Strategy Label. ''The addictive multi-player feature will entertain gamers for hours and will have them rolling on the floor with laughter."

Hogs of War also features a comprehensive training level for players to develop their proper pig butt-kicking skills. Once players are up to speed, they are ready to assault their enemies with an arsenal of such exotic weaponry as sniper rifles, ripple bombs and jetpacks. In addition, the enormous 3D playing levels provide the armies plenty of space to roam or hide.

Developed by Infogrames' Sheffield House, Hogs of War will be available at most major retail stores this summer.

Capcom Releases Resident Evil Code: Veronica

Capcom Entertainment announced the release of Resident Evil Code: Veronica for the Sega Dreamcast home console system.

This highly anticipated game is an entirely new chapter in the award-winning blockbuster series that has sold more than 13 million units

worldwide. Capcom’s Shinji Mikami, creator of the Resident Evil series, is the executive producer for Resident Evil Code: Veronica. Resident Evil Code: Veronica stretches the incredible power of the Sega Dreamcast and introduces new features to the Resident Evil series. Resident Evil Code: Veronica is a two-disk product featuring both Claire and Chris Redfield as playable characters. The game will carry a suggested retail price of $49.95.

Using the impressive power of the Sega Dreamcast, Resident Evil Code: Veronica demonstrates tremendous technical achievements through advanced character graphic development allowing for life-like interpersonal relationships. Other achievement include dynamic lighting effects, such as the subtle, flickering glow from a lighter, a swinging light, or the ‘‘muzzle flash" from a gun.

Environmental effects such as thunder, lightening, rain, steam, and fog bring the world alive as players explore and uncover the dramatic plot. Zombies and enemies are brought to life through seamless detail, which add a chilling reality to their pursuit. The series’ trademark opening cinematic runs at a higher frame rate and delivers motion picture quality computer generated graphics.

Resident Evil Code: Veronica begins as Claire Redfield has left Raccoon City for Europe, headquarters of Umbrella Corporation, in search of her brother Chris and to solve the mystery surrounding Umbrella Corporation’s mysterious activities. In her search she is captured and sent to an isolated prison on a desolate Island. While it remains a mystery how Chris, one of the original S.T.A.R.S. team members, appears in Resident Evil Code: Veronica, players will be reacquainted with his iron will, body of steel and munitions expertise to seek the truth behind the dreaded Umbrella biotoxins.

In Resident Evil Code: Veronica, players will control Claire at the beginning of the game and later can control Chris Redfield in their efforts to stop Umbrella’s devious plans. One of the many features that makes Code: Veronica different from previous Resident Evil games is the Real World System (R.W.S.). Now when Claire opens doors, solves puzzles, stores items or ammunition, they remain in the same spot when playing the second half of the game as Chris for added realism and increased character interaction.

Resident Evil Code: Veronica contains several enhancements including creating an accessible map system so that item boxes and typewriters the players finds are marked on the map and not forgotten. With the new map system each door is coded a different color indicating gameplay status. Now by looking at the color of the door, players will know which ones they have already opened, which ones they have keys to open, and which doors can not be opened until the player finds the keys.

‘‘Resident Evil Code: Veronica is an epic adventure which sets the high water mark for all video games ever created," said Todd Thorson, director of marketing, Capcom Entertainment. ‘‘Unquestionably Resident Evil Code: Veronica is a game that every Sega Dreamcast owner will want to own. Inspired game graphics, a gripping story and chilling gameplay make it the most anticipated Dreamcast title by Resident Evil fans, the press community and consumers worldwide."

Midway’s Popular "Gauntlet Legends" Launches on the PlayStation

Midway Home Entertainment Inc. announced that the highly anticipated ‘‘Gauntlet Legends" for the PlayStation game console is now available in retail outlets nationwide.

Midway has developed the PlayStation game console version of ‘‘Gauntlet Legends" in order to fulfill consumer demand for this title, which was hugely successful on both coin-op and the Nintendofi 64 platform.

While preserving the flair of the original game, the PlayStation game console version of ‘‘Gauntlet Legends" brings new worlds, added enemies, bosses and extended playtime. Fans of ‘‘Gauntlet Legends" can also expect a Sega Dreamcast version to be released later this spring.

‘‘We are pleased to be able to deliver this newest entry to the ‘Gauntlet Legends’ series for the PlayStation game console," said Helene Sheeler, vice president of marketing, Midway Games. ‘‘What makes ‘Gauntlet Legends’ such an intriguing title on any platform is its distinctive blend of action and role playing in one game."

The debut of ‘‘Gauntlet" revolutionized cooperative play and made famous the original characters, including Valkyrie, Wizard and Warrior. Released in October 1998, the arcade version of ‘‘Gauntlet Legends" fast became the No. 1-ranked coin-op game in the nation. Similarly, last fall’s release of ‘‘Gauntlet Legends" for Nintendo 64 found its place on the top 10 video game chart for nearly two months.

A unique mix of role-playing and simultaneous multi-player action sets ‘‘Gauntlet Legends" apart from any other game available for the PlayStation game console. Magic and classic fantasy landscapes shape the ‘‘Gauntlet Legends" universe.

The rich storyline pits a small band of young heroes against the demon Skorne and his hordes of minions. By discovering the locations of the hidden Rune stones, achieved by successfully completing numerous quests and puzzles, players are able to throw back the mantle of evil and rescue their land from certain darkness. The two-player option, as well as the ability to cooperate and explore worlds while facing a multitude of monsters, allows for a totally different gaming experience than the normal action-based game.

‘‘Gauntlet Legends" Key Features:

* Four bonus levels, custom built ONLY for the PlayStation game console
* Intricate quests and a rich storyline set within the renowned ‘‘Gauntlet Legends" realm
* Totally new 3-D interactive environments for all interface screens
* Three entirely new game worlds, replete with never-before-seen enemies, traps, secrets, Easter Eggs, power-ups and devious bosses crafted exclusively for the home version
* New Bosses and new boss levels for the new worlds
* Extended gameplay -- more than 20 hours of pulse-pounding gameplay -- over five times the length of the coin-op version
* Awe inspiring, high-resolution 3-D cinematics for story telling and rewarding the player’s victories
* Dozens of new sub-quests and exclusive secret areas
* Lots of new puzzles for all worlds. Classic coin-op worlds have been converted and redesigned with new puzzles, new hiding places for the Rune stones, and more devious traps to overcome

SQUARESOFT’s Front Mission 3 for the PlayStation Available Now

Square Electronic Arts L.L.C. Thursday announced the availability of FRONT MISSION 3 for the PlayStation game console, which shipped on March 21. The title is a futuristic combat strategy game where players control a variety of mechanized robots. FRONT MISSION 3 offers more than 100 hours of gameplay by giving players two separate story lines to explore.

‘‘We’ve had great success in Japan with the first two versions of FRONT MISSION, selling a total of more than one million units," said Jun Iwasaki, president of Square Electronic Arts. ‘‘Now we are thrilled to offer our American fans the third installment in this great franchise."

In the latest version of FRONT MISSION, players enter the year 2112 as a character called Kazuki Takemura. Kazuki, a worker at a robot ‘‘wanzer" production facility called Kirishima Industries, has just learned that his sister, Alisa, is missing after a massive explosion at the plant. After Kazuki discovers a worldwide conspiracy behind the explosion, he and his gang begin a battle for peace and a quest to find his missing sister.

Players have a choice of two story lines: one focuses on the search for Alisa with a mystery scientist woman, called Emma; the other concentrates on finding and neutralizing the source responsible for the plant explosion with Alisa. This ‘‘Double Feature Scenario" provides a unique set of characters, allies and enemies within each story line. Additionally, players can lose themselves in rich and diverse environments unique to each story line.

Using a turn-based combat system, the player pilots one of several robots called ‘‘wanzers" to fulfill mission objectives and to defeat enemies in mechanical warfare. Players can customize their robots by purchasing stronger weapons or stealing better pieces of armor from a captured robot. Long-range weapons such as a flame-thrower are available to fight the enemy from a distance or they can use hand-to-hand combat weapons such as a baton for close range battles. Players target specific areas of the enemy robot’s bodies depending on the type of damage they want to inflict. For instance, players can destroy the legs to limit movement or they can blast the robot’s arms to disable its weapon. As players progress through levels, they will always have a rotational, overhead view of the battles, allowing them to plan out their next moves and approach combat more strategically.

Square created two new battle systems to ratchet up the element of strategic combat in FRONT MISSION 3. A ‘‘Forced Ejection Battle System" lets players inhabit vacant robots or force enemies out of their current robots. The feature also allows the player to hop into a chopper and attack enemies from the air. A ‘‘Battle Skill" system equips players with more offensive battle power to fight effectively in various situations. Players learn certain skills during battle that are stored in their robot’s computer for subsequent use.

Players will appreciate some of the highly detailed and realistic visual touches that Square’s development team has added to FRONT MISSION 3. For example, players can clearly see the robots’ joint fuses. Those fuses and the robots’ metal armor create some nasty sparks when hit on by enemy fire. The graphics of the game are further enhanced by full motion video sequences throughout.

FRONT MISSION 3 is compatible with the DUALSHOCK analog controller and is priced at US $40. The game carries an ESRB rating of ‘‘T" (Teen).

Eidos Interactive Announces Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation For Sega Dreamcast Is Now Shipping

Eidos Interactive announced that Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation is now shipping to retail stores for Sega Dreamcast.

Boasting spectacular 128 bit graphics, the Dreamcast rendition of Last Revelation will give console gamers a completely new visual experience, being graphically comparable to versions currently displayed by high end, accelerated PC incarnations.

Mike McGarvey, Chief Operating Officer of Eidos, says: ‘‘Eidos has been a supporter of the Dreamcast since the launch of the console in Europe. Alongside publishing original Dreamcast titles, we have a strategy of developing versions of our most successful franchises for the platform. Tomb Raider is one of the most successful brands in our industry’s history and the power of the Dreamcast console greatly enriches the whole Lara Croft experience for game fans the world over."

A wealth of graphical features will be adapted to the Dreamcast version, including bump mapping, environment mapping and volumetric fogging. Features specific to the Dreamcast version will include real-time shadow casting, an enhanced lighting system and a greater draw distance than seen on any previous version of the title. The processing power of the hardware will also be maximized for enhanced sound and accentuated ambience. Lara Croft will undergo some re-modelling and will be displayed in hi-resolution to match the title’s lavish environments.

Sega Releases Time Stalkers, a Next Generation Role Playing Game for Sega Dreamcast

Adventurers beware, worlds are colliding! Sega of America, Inc. announced the release of ‘‘Time Stalkers" for the 128-bit, Internet-ready Sega Dreamcast videogame console. A shining example of a next-generation role playing game (RPG), ‘‘Time Stalkers" takes players on a wild adventure with amazing 3D graphics, highly detailed and expansive 3D environments that are constantly changing, and extensive gameplay amidst a vast storyline. Enhancing the gameplay experience, ‘‘Time Stalkers" features seven mini games via the Visual Memory Unit (VMU), allowing you to take games on the road.

In ‘‘Time Stalkers," players assume the role of a traveler named Sword who is caught up in a time warp and transported to a world that is an amalgam of people and places from different time periods. The player’s goal is to send everyone back to their rightful era and location by unraveling the mystery of the merging realms. This is accomplished by exploring numerous dungeons, while battling it out with a creative array of lurking monsters. Classic turn-based fighting sequences will keep players challenged throughout the adventure.

‘‘Time Stalkers" features new characters, in addition to a few classic

ones from the Genesis days. These adventurers include the young male traveler Sword, an elf, a solitary half-lion warrior, a sorceress, a female fighter and a mysterious doll. Players are able to interact with over 30 different characters in massive ever-changing 3D environments ranging from medieval Europe to Japan in the 1980s. Players have complete 360 degree freedom of movement, and the smooth graphics and captivating expansive 3D worlds, including mysterious dungeon caverns, will envelop players in endless hours of gameplay. With ‘‘automatic random generation," the layout of dungeons change each time you play the game, so players will never experience the same dungeon twice! ‘‘Time Stalkers" also features a holding tank called the Monster House for various creatures that you’ve captured in battle. These captured monsters can then be used to aid Sword on his quest. However, only a few can be brought along per mission.

‘‘Sega is taking the RPG to the next level with ’Time Stalkers’ for Sega Dreamcast," said Charles Bellfield, director of corporate communications, Sega of America. ‘‘With in-depth characters, engaging story lines and environments that change each time players visit them, we have unquestionably improved on the classic RPG format."

Continuing to expand the videogame experience via the VMU, ‘‘Time Stalkers" includes more seven mini games to give players enhanced gameplay. For example, captured monsters can be downloaded to a VMU to be trained and strengthened for future battles. Players can also draw pictures on their VMU and upload it to a picture frame hanging in the Collection Room. ‘‘Time Stalkers" has endless options for gameplay and the intricate storyline will immerse players in the wildest adventure they have ever embarked on. ‘‘Time Stalkers" is available at retailers nationwide for $49.95 and at www.sega.com. ‘‘Time Stalkers" is rated T for Teens.

Electronic Arts Unleashes Porsche in Its Latest Need for Speed Game

Start your engines... Electronic Arts announced the release of Need for Speed: Porsche Unleashed which will give racing enthusiasts the green light to get behind the wheel of a huge collection of Porsches from the storied car manufacturer’s extensive and celebrated lineup.

With a history spanning over 50 years, Porsche AG has handed over the keys to Electronic Arts to provide players the opportunity to race its cars from the classic 356 Roadster to the uber speedy 2000 911 Turbo. In addition to the highly coveted Porsche AG license, the game will feature inspired new tracks and dazzling environments. This latest entry to the award-winning Need for Speed series is now available for the PC and the PlayStation game console system.

Porsche AG offers a truly unique perspective into the progression of auto manufacturing and driving expertise. With more than 80 road and race cars available for the PC and 70 for the PlayStation, players can take the wheel of their favorite Porsche and either floor it through the city streets or put the top down and cruise along a deserted country road.

Courses in Need for Speed: Porsche Unleashed are sure to excite even the most experienced driver. The PC version features nine highly detailed European open road tracks, as well as five closed circuit racetracks that allow gamers the freedom to take alternate routes and short cuts with the ability to fly through road intersections and off ramps. From the Highlands

in Scotland to Industrial Japan, the PlayStation version offers multiple routes and closed circuit racetracks as well. Intense racing in five different countries produces the greatest variability in environments ever seen in any Need for Speed game.

In addition to impressive graphics, Need for Speed: Porsche Unleashed incorporates dynamic weather effects such as rain and snow that will severely impact a car's handling. The PC version of the game also features interactive 3D cockpits and dashboards that can be illuminated for night driving. Realistic driver animations allow you to see your driver kick it into reverse to get out of a sticky situation. In both versions, reckless drivers will be able to view their cars' physical damage and feel the effects in the way the cars handle.

Gamers can push their cars to the limit in two completely new gameplay modes. Factory Driver mode allows drivers to become part of the Porsche Factory Driving Team. As part of the team, they must guide their cars through various missions in order to earn new and different cars, improve driving skills and cope with challenging situations such as dodging traffic on the open road.

Porsche Evolution is a deeper career mode that takes place in a working economy with simulated supply and demand, as well as inflation and depreciation. In the PC version of the game, players can accrue new cars and modify them as their driving skills and finishing times improve. Need for Speed: Porsche Unleashed also includes a quick race mode for instant thrills and white-knuckled excitement, as well as an impressive multi-player mode which has become a favorite among fans of the series.

PlayStation multiplayer will feature split-screen head-to-head racing and boasts four player racing via multi-tap support, the first time ever for a Need For Speed game. The multiplayer version for the PC is supported through modem and LAN connections.

Need for Speed: Porsche Unleashed is developed and published by Electronic Arts in North America. The game offers an ESRB rating of ''E" for ''Everyone" and an MSRP of US$39.95 (PC) and US$39.95 (PlayStation).

For more information on Need for Speed: Porsche Unleashed and the Need for Speed series, visit the official website at: www.needforspeed.com

Roadsters Set to Zoom Into Stores

Titus Interactive announced the release of two more Roadsters games, the popular driving game, for Sega Dreamcast and Sony PlayStation game console, with the PlayStation 2 to come. Roadsters brings the hands-on racing excitement of driving the world's most exotic two-seater, convertible coupes into the home, including official licenses from, Ford, Toyota, Lotus, Fiat and many more.

On top of the standard features of the Roadsters series with 30 cars and eight drivers, the game offers uniquely identifiable personalities and attitudes. The different modes of the game including Roadster Trophy, Quick Race, and Time Trial offer the gamer several exciting ways to experience true racing excitement. In addition, with modifiable parts, each platform has its own unique elements that will greatly enhance the game playing experience. The Dreamcast version boasts an exciting journey through a maze

of natural disasters and cutting edge special effects. The gamer will be able to drive through the worst conditions ever, including avalanches, tornadoes, earthquakes, fires and plane crashes. The Prize Money feature enables the gamer to upgrade cars, buy new models and move up to a higher racing division.

Not for the faint of heart, Roadsters for Dreamcast is THE arcade racing experience. ‘‘With completely different features and new tracks that take advantage of the platform’s graphic capabilities, we are excited to offer an unparallel driving experience complete with unexpected disasters and the challenge of four-player racing," said Frederic Oualid, Vice President of Marketing at Titus Software.

The PlayStation version of Roadsters has 10 challenging tracks, all fully reversible and mirrored. Roadsters for PlayStation offers realistic responsive handling in changing weather conditions combined with interactive pit stops. The betting system for the PlayStation gives the gamer a unique way to enhance the power and speed of car by wagering during the Roadsters Trophy portion of the game. The more money you win the faster your car will go. Losing money on a bet will force your vehicle to get stuck on the track.

With the previous release of Roadsters for the Nintendo 64 and GameBoy Color and the forth-coming release of Roadsters for PlayStation 2, Roadsters will be available for all gamers to fully enjoy.

To add to the excitement Titus has created a most unique promotion. Beginning April 1st gamers can pick up game pieces at participating retailers, including Babbages, for their chance to win a brand new 2000 Ford Mustang Convertible (two year lease) as seen in Roadsters. Over 360 other prizes will be given away, including free video games from Titus and Interplay, as well as gift certificates from ‘‘What’sHotNow.Com." Consumers are encouraged to play as often as they like on the web site www.startitupand.com.

Infogrames North America, Inc. Brings Supersonic Jet Racing to Sony Playstation With NGEN Racing

The year is 2012, we live in a world of global peace where military jets have been modified to become ultra sophisticated racing machines. NGEN, the ultimate power sport has been born. Infogrames North America, Inc. officially announced Wednesday that NGEN Racing, the unique jet engine racing title, is coming to the Sony PlayStation this summer. All adrenaline junkies are invited to pilot these powerful sportscrafts and make a Mach 2 dash for glory!

In a new kind of underground sport, the world’s most advanced fighter crafts are modified and enhanced for extreme low-level flights and are equipped with ultra sophisticated weapons. Players will be thrown into the cockpits of up to 40 genuine high-speed fighter jets to compete on gigantic racing circuits built in real world places as exotic as desert canyons and arctic mountains. The more races you win the more customizing options you get to help make your plane into the ultimate racing machine.

‘‘NGEN Racing puts a new and unique twist on the racing genre with its combination of visually stunning graphics and adrenaline-pumping jet racing action," said David Riley, marketing director for Infogrames North America

Inc.’s Action/Strategy Label. ‘‘Racing through mountainous landscapes in the cockpit of a jet will enthrall racing fans and newcomers alike and will leave gamers marveling at the speed and handling of the jets. It’s really the ultimate race!"

Featuring two control methods and two racing modes, NGEN Racing offers the option of customizing the races to fit the players’ skill level. Arcade mode and NGEN racing modes will allow players to choose between straight racing and turismo-style modified racing. In NGEN racing mode pilots buy and modify their jet aircrafts then compete in a series of races in order to win cash to further their racing careers.

NGEN Racing also offers intense two-player action with head-to-head races or a unique two-player feature called Powerball. The objective of Powerball is to capture a blue glowing ball found in the center of the landscape arena and to keep it as long as possible while your opponent tries to steal it. Disabled weapons and speed hindrance are the detriments to having the powerball. Using extreme flying skills is your only defense against your opponent who has his weapons fully intact to help knock the powerball out of your grasp. The player who has kept the powerball for the longest at the end of the battle wins.

Developed by Curly Monsters, NGEN Racing also features TV-style replays, a variety of offensive and defensive weapons, a precision 3D engine, and an original soundtrack from Matt Darey. For updates and current news on the progress of NGEN Racing, visit the official Web site at www.ngenracing.com.

989 Sports’ MLB 2001 Redefines Baseball Videogame Category

989 Sports announced that MLB 2001, the next installment in 989 Sports’ popular MLB baseball videogame series, will be available in stores on Tuesday, March 28 for the PlayStation game console. With all the MLB teams and players, brand-new features such as a Franchise Mode and consultation from the biggest names in baseball, MLB 2001 sets the standard for PlayStation baseball videogames.

‘‘The MLB development team has continually pushed the envelope to deliver the most realistic baseball experience in a videogame," said Troy Mack, product manager, 989 Sports. ‘‘By involving numerous baseball professionals in the development process of this year’s game, MLB 2001 will be the most incredible baseball simulation ever to hit the PlayStation. Gamers and baseball enthusiasts will be impressed with its new features and ultra-realistic graphics."

During the development of MLB 2001, 989 Sports consulted with Los Angeles Dodgers Manager Davey Johnson, San Diego Padres hitting legend Tony Gwynn as well as the Padres feared reliever Trevor Hoffman, to create the most strategic Artificial Intelligence (AI) ever developed for a baseball videogame. Tony Gwynn and Trevor Hoffman were also ‘‘motion captured" to provide new player animations for MLB 2001.

MLB 2001 looks and feels like real baseball, with more than 250 personalized moves and stances of MLB pitchers and batters. New player models are scaled to actual height, weight and body style as well as feature actual player faces. Even the stadiums are sculpted to perfection with every realistic detail incorporated. This includes the new stadiums like Safeco Field in Seattle, Pacific Bell Park in San Francisco and

Comerica Park in Detroit.

To further increase the realism of MLB 2001, an all-new Franchise Mode was added where gamers will have to use their gaming skills and scouting ability to win games and earn points in order to sign big name players and build their team into a powerhouse.

MLB 2001 also has all the features gamers have grown to love. Hall of Fame broadcaster Vin Scully and ESPN analyst Dave Campbell are reunited to bring MLB 2001 to life like no other baseball videogame has done before. The GM Mode returns as a key feature, enabling gamers to create, draft, trade, call up, waive, release and sign players as free agents. The Manager Mode is back to let gamers call all the shots and utilize the in-game scouting reports to set up hitters and make lineup changes. And the popular Spring Training Mode returns with new Spring Training stadiums.

MLB 2001 features All-Star and National League MVP Chipper Jones of the Atlanta Braves on the package.

* MLB 2001 -- Key Features
* All MLB teams and players with the latest signings and trades
* All-new Franchise Mode allows gamers to build a powerhouse team from the ground up
* New managerial AI consultation from Los Angeles Dodgers Manager Davey Johnson
* New batting AI consultation from San Diego Padres Outfielder Tony Gwynn
* New pitching AI consultation from San Diego Padres Reliever Trevor Hoffman
* Two-man booth with Hall of Famer Vin Scully and ESPN analyst Dave Campbell
* Authentic TV style presentation
* All the MLB stadiums, including the new Safeco Field in Seattle, Pacific Bell Park in San Francisco and Comerica Park in Detroit
* New motion capture animations from San Diego Padres Tony Gwynn and Trevor Hoffman
* New detailed player model shows wrinkles and folds in player’s uniform as well as actual player faces and body styles
* Total Control Batting(TM) returns with even more advanced control to battle the fiercest pitchers in the league
* Total Control Fielding(TM) is back. Fielders dive, throw from their knees, crow-hop, twirl throw, throw on the run, and make barehanded grabs
* More than 250 personalized batting stances and pitching motions
* Realistic player performance including the signature batting stances of Chipper Jones, Mo Vaughn and Jeff Bagwell; the double-play artistry of Nomar Garciaparra and Robbie Alomar; and the unmistakable pitching motions of Kevin Brown, The Rocket and Curt Schilling
* Play Modes: Franchise, Spring Training, Home Run Derby, Exhibition, full season with multiple season lengths and All-Star(TM)
* Play as a GM. Draft, trade, sign, release or re-assign players to your Farm System
* Manager Mode returns to let gamers utilize the in-game scouting reports prepared by former Major League scouts for on-the-fly stats and lineup changes. Watch as the CPU makes trades between teams. Also be sure to keep an eye on the trading deadline
* More than 90 statistical categories for each player
* While playing in Season Mode be prepared for the injury bug. Players can go on the D.L.
* End-of-season awards: AL and NL MVP, Batting and saves titles, Rookie

of the Year and Cy Young
* Three difficulty levels (rookie, veteran and all-star)

Acclaim Sports' All-Star Baseball 2001 Ships

Acclaim Sports announced that All-Star Baseball 2001 for the Nintendo 64 has shipped to retailers across the US. Developed by High Voltage Software, Inc., All-Star Baseball 2001 is the only new baseball game for the Nintendo 64 this season, and is already drawing rave reviews from the industry. In their May issue, Incite Video Gaming magazine gave the game a five-star review, calling All-Star Baseball 2001 the ''slickest, smoothest, most scintillating baseball game this season, spanning all systems."

Endorsed by New York Yankees' superstar Derek Jeter, All-Star Baseball 2001 features the first ever Hall of Fame team with players like Reggie Jackson and Nolan Ryan. The game also includes key features such as: third-generation Hi-Rez graphics and realistic player animations unmatched in any baseball title; all 30 Major League Baseball teams and over 900 players; all-new batting practice mode; faster gameplay and easy batting/pitching options.

''Having the only new baseball game for the Nintendo 64 didn't mean that we could rest on our past successes with the All-Star Baseball franchise," said Rick Mehler, marketing manager for All-Star Baseball 2001. ''We've taken what everyone loved about last year's game and made it even better -- it's safe to say that fans will be blown away by All-Star Baseball 2001."

Video Game Makers Sue Yahoo!

Three of the world's major makers of video games have sued Internet portal Yahoo! Inc. to bar the sale of allegedly counterfeit video games on Yahoo's Web site.

The suit, which the plaintiffs believe is the first of its kind filed against an online retailer, claims Yahoo! provides for the auction and sales of pirated video games at its site, and directly profits from what it knows is illegal.

It also underscores the video game makers' determination to stop the sale of counterfeit games, which annually costs the industry over $3.2 billion in lost sales globally, according to the industry group Interactive Digital Software Association.

The plaintiffs are Nintendo of America, Sega of America, and the largest game developer in the U.S., Redwood City, Calif.-based Electronic Arts Inc.

Collectively, they make and sell some of the world's leading titles, such as the Pokemon and Mario games from Nintendo and EA Sports titles from Electronic Arts. Nintendo makes the popular Nintendo 64 and Game Boy players, and Sega offers the Dreamcast player.

''The action ... is not only designed to clean up Yahoo's site, but to send a message to Internet software pirates that there are no safe havens for those who steal the industry's creative products," Richard Flamm,

Nintendo of America’s general counsel said in a statement on Monday.

A Yahoo! spokeswoman declined to comment, saying the company has yet to receive a copy of the suit.

The suit, filed in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, seeks an injunction against Yahoo! to halt the auctions and sales of counterfeit computer and video games, as well as illegal devices designed to circumvent copyright protection. It also seeks compensatory damages.

The plaintiffs allege that Yahoo is not a passive provider of auction and other retail services, but rather that it has actual knowledge of the illegal activity.

They say they have advised Yahoo ‘‘many times" that illegal copies of the products are being sold on the site and asked Yahoo to put a stop to it, but that Yahoo has not done so.

‘‘We keep an eye on all of them (auction Web sites)," said Mike Page, an attorney with Keker & Van Nest, a San Francisco law firm which is acting as general counsel for the video gaming companies. ‘‘Some are better than others in self-policing...Nobody is perfect but I think other sites are doing a better job of getting rid of repeat offenders."

In recent years, the piracy issue has been largely confined to overseas markets due to copyright protection in the United States, but the plaintiffs claim Yahoo is now providing ‘‘a growing marketplace or distribution channel for pirates."

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A-ONE’s Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Microsoft Offer Not Good Enough

Microsoft Corp’s settlement offer in its landmark antitrust case acknowledges that it must change but falls far short of an acceptable approach, persons close to the case said on Monday.

The offer comes as District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson is ready to hand down his conclusions of law some time after Tuesday, although it is not clear when.

The conclusions are widely expected to find that Microsoft violated the nation’s antitrust statutes.

Neither Microsoft nor representatives of the Justice Department and the 19 states that brought the suit in 1998 had any comment to make.

The Microsoft proposal, of about a dozen pages, gives with one hand but

takes away with the other, sources said.

The Justice Department felt burned after it made a deal with Microsoft in 1995 that seemed to address many of the problems in the firm’s practices at that time.

The government went to court in 1997 alleging Microsoft violated the agreement by bundling its Web browser with its Windows product. But Microsoft fended off the challenge by successfully exploiting a tiny loophole in the agreement.

‘‘In a far-reaching conduct remedy such as the one that is being discussed in the press, the devil is in the details," said Georgetown University Law School Professor Steven Salop.

Microsoft’s complex new proposal has 14 conditions, any one of which could undercut its impact, the sources say.

The company seems to promise to open up its secret source code for the Windows operating system so that other companies or computer makers could modify it.

The company also appears to offer to remove its Internet browser in some versions of the operating system.

And the offer includes what at first blush seems to be a promise to end price discrimination on the sales of software to all PC makers. Many of the conditions were first reported by The Wall Street Journal in Monday editions.

The newspaper also reported that Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates held a telephone conversation Saturday with Richard Posner, the federal appeals court judge in Chicago appointed as a mediator by Jackson.

But in each case, there are limits to the offers that cast doubt on their utility in bringing about significant change, sources say.

Although Microsoft seems to offer a settlement that would apply to all future versions of its Windows 2000 software, it is unclear whether it would apply to all future versions of Windows, sources say.

Microsoft has also offered to make its Application Program Interfaces (API) -- used to compose programs that will work with Windows -- available as it invents them. Many APIs are now offered, but some are held back and some are given out selectively.

‘‘It would take a federal software engineering force to have a chance to enforce" such a provision, said Ed Black, president of the Computer and Communications Industry Association.

And there are other, broader problems with a settlement in the view of some analysts.

In the past few years, the heads of the nation’s antitrust agencies -- Federal Trade Commission Chairman Robert Pitofsky and Justice Department antitrust chief Joel Klein -- have expressed a preference for court decisions over settlements. They have said that courts and not agencies should define antitrust law.

Georgetown Law’s Salop echoed those views and said the judge should issue

his conclusions of law.

‘‘It is important to have the court make a ruling on this case in order to clarify the legal status of Microsoft’s conduct," Salop said. ‘‘The states and the Justice Department should not deal the courts out of this case."

There would still be plenty of time to settle after that, should the parties wanted to, Salop noted.

Microsoft Ruling Delayed to Help Talks

The judge in the Microsoft Corp. case gave the parties a deadline of April 6 to cut a deal, delaying his ruling on whether the company broke the nation’s antitrust laws, sources said on Tuesday.

District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson had set Tuesday as the deadline for the government and Microsoft to let him know whether they were making progress toward a settlement, sources familiar with the case said.

A court spokesman said earlier in the day there would be no ruling from the judge on Tuesday, without setting a date. Jackson gave the parties the extra time to see if further progress could be made, sources familiar with the case said.

Neither Microsoft nor the government had any comment Tuesday afternoon.

Microsoft stock rose on news of the delay to a high of 107 7/16 but closed at 104 5/16, up 1/4 for the day in active trade on Nasdaq..

An industry figure said the mediator appointed by Jackson -- U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Richard Posner in Chicago -- did not want to give up now after having invested four months in trying to bring the case to a conclusion.

‘‘This is a strong-willed mediator who does not want to declare the mediation process dead yet," said Ken Wasch, president of the Software and Information Industry Association.

Judge Jackson last year handed down findings of fact in the landmark case brought by the Justice Department and 19 states, holding that Microsoft had abused monopoly power, harming competitors, consumers and other companies.

Jackson has made it clear to both sides he would prefer to see them settle the case, which antitrust lawyers say could last until 2002 or longer with appeals, rather than issue his next ruling.

Wasch said Posner was highly committed to bringing the case to a conclusion. ‘‘Basically, this is Judge Posner saying, ’Microsoft has put something on the table. Let’s spend some time talking about it."’

Microsoft has proposed remedies that would force it to change its business practices, but has ruled out a structural remedy such as breaking up the company, sources said.

But Wasch said neither the Justice Department nor most of the states ‘‘have taken structural remedies off the table." A structural remedy commonly

refers to the breaking up of a company.

Wasch, whose organization filed a friend-of-the-court brief at the invitation of the Justice Department, said there are big problems with any conduct remedy.

‘‘I have yet to find anyone who has presented a workable monitoring and enforcement plan that doesn’t equate to government regulation of the industry," he said. ‘‘It’s a short step from a monitoring and enforcement program to a regulatory one."

But Bill Kolasky, a lawyer with Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering, which prepared a friend-of-the-court brief on behalf of the Association for Competitive Technology (ACT), said that conduct remedies are the rule and structural remedies the exception. Act, which has received some contributions from Microsoft, filed the brief at the invitation of the Redmond, Wash.-based software company.

Kolasky said that conduct remedies can be enforced ‘‘with minimal ongoing government regulation."

Kolasky said that if the two sides agreed on a conduct remedy, competitors ‘‘will be monitoring Microsoft’s compliance with any conduct remedies and will not be shy to bring alleged violations to the government’s attention as they have in the past."

Wasch said the Justice Department remains was troubled about the repercussions from a 1995 agreement with Microsoft, signed by the then-head of the Justice Department’s antitrust division, Ann Bingaman.

Microsoft relied on an ambiguous clause in that agreement to meld its Windows operating system with its browser, an act that the government contends put rival Netscape at a disadvantage.

Netscape’s market share and stock price both dropped subsequently and eventually it sold out to America Online.

‘‘Klein does not want to end up being ’Bingamanned’, which is signing a deal prematurely and finding Microsoft flouting it before the ink is dry," said Wasch.

The Justice Department challenged Microsoft’s actions under the 1995 agreement, but lost on appeal.

But Kolasky had a different view. He said the appeals court decision noted that what the Justice Department had deemed a violation ‘‘actually benefited consumers by giving them a better software product."

Mac OS 9 Update Leaks Out Early

While Apple has yet to announce it, some users have been able to download the updater to Mac OS 9.0.4 from the company’s own servers.

Mac OS 9.0.4 is here -- or is it?

Sources close to Apple Computer Inc. told ZDNet News that the updater some users have downloaded from the company’s servers was a pre-release version

being tested internally at Apple’s Cupertino, Calif., headquarters. The official release of Mac OS 9.0.4 will take place some time next week, sources said.

User reports of the updater’s availability have spawned speculation on enthusiast sites across the Web. While Apple has not announced the upgrade or a release date, some users are reporting that they have been able either to download the update or access it through their computers’ Software Update Control Panel.

"Nobody outside of the firewall should have gotten it," the source said.

The update, code-named Minuet, is a consolidation of bug fixes and system-specific tweaks included in the OS 9 software that shipped alongside recently released hardware such as the revised iBook, iMac DV and the "Pismo" PowerBook G3.

According to a listing of system components posted on the Italian site MacProf, Mac OS 9.0.4 contains new versions of the system’s FireWire and Universal Serial Bus extensions (the latter has long been a source of complaint among Mac users); as well as fixes to the Sound Manager, which was tapped as the cause of stuttering during DVD movie playback.

In addition, the new version apparently includes enhancements to the Mac OS ROM and PowerPC Enabler 9.0.4 files, as well as the Script Editor and ATI drivers included with the latest Apple hardware.

Mac OS 9 was originally announced in October and shipped almost three weeks later. The new OS, which replaced Mac OS 8.6, updated the system’s kernel and included the Sherlock 2 Internet search application, multiple user capabilities and other new features.

Microsoft Releases Tardy Mac Browser

Operating on the assumption that late is better than never, Microsoft has unveiled its newest browser for the Macintosh platform--a full year after releasing Internet Explorer 5 for Windows.

The Mac edition of IE 5 became available for download this week after a series of delays. Microsoft initially planned a summer 1999 release but delayed it to the fall. In September, the company acknowledged it had missed that mark and pushed back the release to winter.

This is the second week of spring.

Microsoft will have to count on Mac users’ patience lasting even a little longer: The new browser, which works with Mac OS 7.6.1 and later, still lacks the radio toolbar that was one of IE 5’s most noticeable new features when it launched for Windows last March. The radio bar has a play/stop button, a mute button, a volume dial and a drop-down menu that lets people add a radio station to their "favorites" list.

Even so, Mac users will be the first to use some new IE 5 tools, including an Auction Manager. First previewed in July at the Macworld trade show in New York, the tool keeps track of auctions, letting people know when they are outbid, when auctions close, and whether someone has paid for or received items.

The Mac edition of IE 5 also has an Internet Scrapbook, which lets people store and organize Web pages.

One cosmetic change in the spirit of recent Macintosh trends lets people change the color of the browser frame; choices include blueberry, Bondi, grape, graphite, lime, PowerBook black, PowerBook bronze, strawberry and tangerine.

Judge Files Injunction Against Software Hackers

A U.S. District judge in Boston on Tuesday forbade two computer hackers from posting source code that could lead others to the list of Web sites banned by the Cyber Patrol Internet filtering software, which is sold by a unit of toymaker Mattel Inc.

But U.S. District Court Judge Edward Harrington’s permanent injunction left Mattel’s Microsystems Software and the American Civil Liberties Union, which represents operators of three "mirror" sites that posted the code or provided links to it, quibbling over whether the ruling applies to the sites.

The ruling against the two hackers, Eddy Jansson of Sweden and Matthew Skala of Canada, is essentially moot because the two men, who ‘‘reverse engineered" the Cyber Patrol code, already settled the copyright suit brought against them by Microsystems and agreed to turn over their code.

Microsystems said in a press release that Harrington’s permanent injunction applies to the mirror sites, which also published the ‘‘cphack" program.

In his ruling, Harrington wrote that ‘‘all persons in active concert or participation" with Skala or Jansson should stop publishing the code.

But ACLU attorney Chris Hansen said, ‘‘I still don’t think we know whether it applies to the mirror sites."

The entire dispute, which included subpoenas e-mailed to mirror site operators, has created a cyberstorm of controversy over copyright law and free speech.

The ACLU, which said it disagrees with the ruling and is weighing its options, has argued that parents who use Cyber Patrol -- one of many programs that filters violent or obscene Web content -- can’t know whether too much or too little is being blocked if the firm won’t reveal what it bans.

‘‘I still don’t think we have a productive debate about the value of products like Cyber Patrol as long as they continue to hide what they do," Hansen said.

Cyber Patrol General Manager Susan Getgood said the ruling and the firm’s settlement with the two hackers ‘‘vindicates our efforts to protect our customers and defend our intellectual property."

In his order, Harrington wrote that the case involves more than copyright law. ‘‘It raises a most profound societal issue, namely, who is to control the educational and intellectual nourishment of young children -- the

parents or the purveyors of pornography and the merchants of death and violence."

SEC Creating Online Surveillance

Federal securities regulators, stepping up their fight against burgeoning fraud over the Internet, are creating an automated surveillance system to search Web sites, message boards and chat rooms.

But a major accounting firm says it won’t participate because the Securities and Exchange Commission’s new system might encroach on the privacy of innocent people as it searches for phrases such as ‘‘get rich quick."

The computer technology involved in the enhanced SEC surveillance program ‘‘is equivalent to, in my opinion, wiretapping ... the equivalent of planting a bug," said Larry Ponemon, a partner in charge of privacy issues at PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, one of the world’s largest accounting and consulting firms.

The firm was among 107 companies invited by the SEC in January to bid to operate the automated surveillance system. It told the market watchdog agency it did not wish to participate because of privacy concerns and possible violations of the Constitution’s protections against unreasonable search and seizure.

‘‘It’s a search and seizure issue," Ponemon said Tuesday in a telephone interview.

The SEC says it willnot gather e-mail messages or other communications unless they appear in public online forums and will throw away any data collected that doesn’t indicate possible wrongdoing.

‘‘Privacy issues are of long-standing importance to the commission and we pay close attention to the letter and the spirit of the law," said SEC spokesman Chris Ullman.

He said the new system, which would copy online material into a database to be analyzed by SEC investigators, simply ‘‘will mechanize what the commission now does by hand."

The SEC’s project was first reported in Tuesday’s editions of The Wall Street Journal. The newspaper noted that Internet titan America Online Inc., many of whose message boards and chat rooms are home to discussions of stock investments, prohibits anyone from harvestinginformation from them because of privacy concerns.

Consequently, AOL might oppose the federal agency’s project, The Journal suggested. Spokesmen for AOL declined to comment to the newspaper; they weren’t immediately available for comment to The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Ponemon lauded the SEC’s goal of beefing up its monitoring of the Internet for fraudulent investment activity, which SEC inspectors now do manually with computer search engines. He said other technologies could be used - notably electronic ‘‘cookies" that track personal activity online - that would respect constitutional boundaries and still be more effective than

the SEC's current manual system.

Ponemon suggested that certain types of ''cookies" would be less intrusive than the Web ''crawler" called for in the SEC's project, which would scan the Internet for as many as 40 telltale words or phrases. A cookie is a small file that a Web site deposits on an individual's hard drive, often with a unique number that identifies the user's computer. The next time someone using that computer goes back to the site, the site will recognize the computer.

''This is government spying on the innocent, plain and simple," said George Getz, a spokesman for the Libertarian Party. ''It's no different than the police tapping everyone's phones just because someone might have committed a crime."

Marc Beauchamp, executive director of the North American Securities Administrators Association, noted the delicate balance between the government's need to pursue investment fraud and its duty to protect citizens' privacy. His group, which represents securities regulators in the states, also has cracked down on investment fraud over the Internet.

Still, he said, ''The crooks are using the new technology at hand and the cops need to use the technology to stay ahead of the crooks."

The SEC and state regulators have been in an uphill fight against Internet fraud, which has been proliferating in online junk mail and newsletters, electronic chat rooms and Web sites.

Because the Internet is everywhere, unscrupulous stock promoters anywhere in the world can cloak themselves in anonymity and lure investors across the country, who have lost millions in such schemes in recent years.

Last month, the SEC asked Congress for $150 million for enforcement work and investor education for fiscal 2001. The agency's ''Cyberforce," now some 240 strong, prowls the Internet looking for investment scams and other securities fraud.

The SEC fraud-fighters don't have the legal authority to go undercover online. Unlike the Justice Department, the SEC cannot put anyone in jail; it can only file civil lawsuits against suspected violators.

SEC System Raises Privacy Worries

Federal regulators, on the lookout for phrases such as ''get rich quick," are creating an automated surveillance system to search Web sites, message boards and chat rooms for fraud.

But a major accounting firm says it won't participate because the Securities and Exchange Commission's new system might encroach on the privacy of innocent people using the Internet.

The technology in the enhanced SEC surveillance program ''is equivalent to, in my opinion, wiretapping ... the equivalent of planting a bug," said Larry Ponemon, a partner in charge of privacy issues at PricewaterhouseCoopers, one of the world's largest accounting and consulting firms.

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Internet fraud is proliferating in online junk mail, chat rooms and Web sites, with unscrupulous stock promoters anywhere in the world able to cloak themselves in anonymity and lure investors.

Last month, the SEC asked Congress for $150 million for enforcement and investor education for fiscal 2001. It has 240 people prowling the Internet for scams.

Every Day's for Fools on Internet

Free trips to Disney World, courtesy of Microsoft Corp.? Free soda from Coca-Cola? Free cars from Honda?

Forget it!

You don’t have to wait for April Fools’ Day. Every day is a joke on the Internet. As the Net grows, so do the number of hoaxes and other mischief carried through e-mail.

Rumors, pranks and hoaxes are not unique to the Internet, but they spread more quickly because of it, said Barbara Mikkelson, who runs a Web site that tries to dispel such myths.

‘‘Before, when I had a hot piece of gossip, I had to find my best friend and share it over a fence," she said. ‘‘Now I don’t have to wait."

Take the Neiman Marcus ‘‘cookie recipe." Someone supposedly is billed $250 for the store’s $2.50 recipe. In revenge, she forwards copies of the recipe to friends - and urges them to do the same.

When the rumor began circulating offline more than a decade ago, the department store didn’t sell cookies at its restaurants. The tale later made its way to the Internet - and the company still gets calls and letters.

To play along, Neiman Marcus created a recipe and then gave it away - for free. ‘‘It can be a big distraction," spokeswoman Ginger Reeder said. ‘‘The only way you handle it is with good humor and grace."

No one quite knows the roots of such myths.

‘‘I suspect they are the result of creative minds trapped in boring jobs," said Brian Maddox of Barrington, Ill., a regular recipient of electronic chain letters.

But such messages can clog company computers, trigger mistrust or encourage risky behavior. Internet users tired of virus hoaxes might ignore real threats. Sunbathers believing that sunscreen causes blindness might avoid the salve and risk sunburn or skin cancer.

David Spalding, who writes the online column ‘‘Hoax du Jour," said friends and relatives often spread such ‘‘cyberban legends" with good intent. They are difficult to stop, he said, because ‘‘it’s hard to tell Grandma or your brother, ‘Don’t send me e-mail."’

While Internet veterans may see through the hoaxes, newcomers often do not. As they get wiser, new generations of believers log on.

‘‘People bring with them some old habits they learned from getting most of their information from the traditional media, mostly the ability to trust," said David Emery, who tracks urban legends for About.com. ‘‘They are not prepared for the anarchy."

Emery offers these tips: Assume contents are false unless proven otherwise. Be skeptical if an offer - free Coke, free cars - appears overly generous. Verify before forwarding.

Alissa Strauss of Chicago learned that lesson. On the off-chance that she could replace an 11-year-old junker, she forwarded the Honda ‘‘promotion" to friends. Instead of a car, she got back Honda’s denial and a friend’s threat: ‘‘Never do this again."

‘‘I really need a car," Strauss said later. ‘‘I just hoped, even though I don’t ever believe in these."

Some companies may not be so forgiving. Citing a nonexistent study, one prankster falsely claimed that Kentucky Fried Chicken uses no chicken and thus had to change its name to KFC. The company posted a denial on its Web site and vowed to find the troublemaker.

For Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates, chain letters are an abuse of technology and a waste of time. ‘‘There’s a lot of hooey on the Internet," he wrote on his company’s Web site.

Charles Hymes, who runs Don’t Spread That Hoax online, laughs - and agrees.

‘‘The line between a hoax and a joke is sometimes pretty thin," he conceded. ‘‘There’s nothing so outrageous, so goofy, that it won’t be believed by thousands and thousands of people."

Consider last year’s alert: For spring cleaning, all computer users should disconnect from 11:59 p.m. March 31 to 12:01 a.m. April 2, Greenwich Mean Time. Of course, if Internet users did just that, there would be no Internet left to clean up.

Is Your Browser History?

Smaller. Faster. Customized. The emerging market for ’embedded browsers’ could make lumbering Netscape and IE software look like dinosaurs.

Despite Microsoft’s and Netscape’s claims to the contrary, the browser race isn’t over yet.

While the two browser kingpins continue to trade proclamations of Windows desktop domination, a number of lesser-known players targeting the embedded market are the ones pushing the most interesting technological and market developments.

The prettiest HTML screen display doesn’t necessarily win; the most compact technology that best displays plain old text does. On cell phones or Internet appliances, customers want quick access to stock quotes, sport scores and global positioning data. A one-size-fits-all approach is superceded by embedded browsers’ more customized interfaces, tailor-made to handle niche chores, like monitoring a soda machine’s stock.

With these kind of diverse requirements, it’s not surprising that the browser contest is more than just a two-horse race.

By no means are the big boys conceding defeat, however. Microsoft and Netscape claim they have grand browser plans across a variety of embedded devices. Microsoft recently demonstrated a research prototype of a technology called MiPad, which blends speech, pen and other multimodal input capabilities into an interface that could run on a variety of wireless devices, from cell phones to wrist watches.

’The embedded market will show that no single browser can dominate’|H kon Wium Lie, Opera Software But the companies with the more readily available and advanced offerings in the embedded browser arena are not necessarily household names.

In the embedded space, "everyone says they’re the leader, but no one has established clear-cut domination," says Jupiter Communications Web

technology strategies analyst Lydia Liozides.

Why are there no runaway favorites? The embedded world consists of a number of different emerging markets, each of which requires "different branding needed on different devices on different networks," Liozides explains. It’s also a lot tougher to develop a tight, small browser that runs well on a cell phone, than it is to create a developer-oriented, multipurpose PC browser.

One company that already has discovered the challenges of porting to multiple form factors is Opera Software S/A, the Oslo, Norway-based developer of the Opera browser. While Opera Software pitches its browser as a faster, smaller alternative to Internet Explorer and Navigator for Windows PCs, the company is also writing for the Mac, BeOS, Linux and EPOC platforms. Opera Software is targeting the second calendar quarter as the ship date for Version 4.0 of Opera for all of these platforms.

"The worst thing that could happen to the Web is a single vendor dominating," says Opera chief technology officer H kon Wium Lie. "The embedded market will show that no single browser can dominate."

Because it is not focusing exclusively on the embedded device market, Opera Software has a lot of the same priorities as Microsoft and Netscape, in terms of browser development. Like the giants, Opera Software is expending considerable energy on making sure it’s compliant with the latest versions of standards, including HTML, HTTP, DOM, CSS (cascading style sheets) and the like. But Opera is also adding some of its own twists, such as building into version 4.0 of its product a split-screen HTML viewing capability it calls its "PowerPoint killer."

Opera’s not the only company targeting the embedded Linux space. Lineo Inc. (formerly known as Caldera Thin Clients Inc.) is finding success partnering with a variety of embedded device vendors, ranging from Motorola to Samsung.

Lineo wasn’t planning on getting into the browser space. It developed its Embedix browser in response to embedded Linux customer requests for a low-resolution embedded browser, officials claim. Currently, Lineo’s browser runs only on Lineo’s Embedix Linux, but the company is considering decoupling the two and offering its browser for other Linux distributions, says CEO and president Bryan Sparks.

With its Embedix browser, Lineo is attempting to walk the fine line between a full-featured platform and a compact, portable browser. "In this space, size is a definite consideration. The output screen is a consideration. The ability to port to multiple chips, since Intel isn’t dominant, is important. You need to think about peripheral support for Flash memory, disk on a chip," admits Sparks. "But there are some areas we don’t try to address, like some of the desktop plug-ins."

What Lineo does want to address is the need of its hardware-vendor customers for browsers for very specific vertical niches, says Sparks. In the not-too-distant future, he expects hardware companies to tune and sell customized Embedix browsers into areas like medical inventory control.

Browsers for TVs, Web phones and tablets aren’t the only space where vendors are aiming to innovate. The original browser pioneer, Spyglass Inc., also has defined a separate category it calls the "micro browser" market as one where providing the best "browsing experience" is key. By dividing browsing functionality between the client and server, Spyglass is

trying to carve out a niche for itself between embedded and standalone PC browsers.

Spyglass has been moving away from the desktop browser space since late 1996, when the company saw the handwriting on the wall, in terms of Microsoft's plans for PC browser domination, according to Anup Murarka, Spyglass vice president for interactive TV platforms. (Microsoft licensed Spyglass' Mosaic technology in 1995, and used it as the core of Internet Explorer.)

"In the standalone [desktop browser] space, success is determined more by content access than by anything else," says Murarka. "The Windows space has a consistent, predictable platform with one player with 80-plus percent market share. In our space, there are lots of form factors, even though there is really just one set of core APIs (application programming interfaces)."

The degree to which there really is one core set of interfaces -- in the embedded or standalone browser market -- is debatable. Microsoft, for instance, offers a number of different Internet Explorer configurations for different devices, such as Pocket IE for PocketPC handhelds, Mobile Explorer for phones and TV Explorer for WebTV systems.

But company officials admit that the various IE implementations have little in common beyond the "Explorer" name because the form factor requirements are so different.

"You can't take a one-size-fits-all approach, due to the difference in physicality and inputs," says Phil Holden, group product manager for Microsoft's mobile devices division. "What you get with a web-enabled phone is very different from what you get on a PocketPC, with high-quality, true color screens that are a third of the size of VGA [monitors]."

Because of this, Microsoft's advances in IE market share on desktop PCs don't automatically translate into given leadership in the embedded space, Holden admits.

Microsoft rival Netscape, on the other hand, seems to be counting on its history as a desktop browser leader to propel itself to embedded browser success.

It's a precarious position for Netscape, the America Online Inc. subsidiary, given the company's much publicized delays in delivering version 6 of its Navigator product via its Mozilla open source arm. The first public beta of version 6 is slated for mid-April. Netscape is touting version 6's compliance with Web standards, its appeal to software developers as a development environment in its own right, and its inclusion of the "Gecko" rendering engine.

"We'll have a smaller download size and we're working on speed enhancements for quicker page display," says Chris Saito, senior director of product marketing. "We'll make customization easier than ever before."

As to AOL/Netscape's intentions to target specific embedded devices like cell phones, the company remains mum. "We're working there," is all Saito will say. Just as AOL is pushing its Instant Messenger technology to cell phones, it will make similar moves with its browser, he says.

E-mail Scribes Deleting the Rules

if you’ve recieved an e-mail that loks like this ... you’r NOT alone !!!!!!!!! :)

Experts say people who communicate via computer are becoming increasingly informal - and sloppy. E-mail is routinely strewn with typos, grammatical errors and various shortcuts, such as no capital letters.

The trend - as relaxed as the Silicon Valley dress code - really bugs some grammar purists.

"A student wouldn’t walk into a professor’s office asking a question using bad English. Why would they send me that kind of mistake in an e-mail?" gripes Kenneth Brown, an assistant professor at the University of Iowa business school.

An avid tracker of e-mail etiquette, Brown says he regularly chides students for sending sloppy e-mail to him and even prospective employers. Some faculty members have also gotten a talking to.

Shonquis Moreno, a 28-year-old writer from New York with a penchant for the lower-case, says she likes the ‘‘more intimate, casual, off-the-cuff tenor" her e-mails have. In many cases, she has even stopped fixing jumbled letters.

‘‘Maybe it’s because I know that typos are recognizable as typos and not spelling errors," says Moreno, who works for an Internet startup and finds herself scurrying to answer more than 30 e-mails a day.

By the end of last year, there were 335 million e-mailboxes - more than one per person - in the United States, according to the trade publication Messaging Online. That represents a 73 percent leap in just one year.

Internet experts say the advent of instant messages - real-time conversations - has only heightened the casual, abbreviated nature of online ‘‘chatting." But even they warn against misspellings and grammatical goofs.

On the Web, ‘‘you won’t be judged by the color of your skin, eyes, or hair, your weight, your age, or your clothing," author Virginia Shea says in her rules of Netiquette, which are posted online. ‘‘You will, however, be judged by the quality of your writing."

The solution? Re-read your e-mail, not just for mistakes but for impetuous words, says Eric Arnum, Online Messaging’s editor.

‘‘If you type faster than you think, there’s a danger there that your words will do more than offend schoolmarms," he says, pointing to the recent use of e-mails as evidence in the antitrust case against Microsoft.

Asked via an online mailing list what they thought about e-mail’s informality, everyday computer users replied in droves.

Jeff Rubin, a newsletter publisher in Pinole, Calif., said computer communication has become a ‘‘forum for people who cannot spell or string 10 words together."

‘‘I have a friend who has a daily, paid-subscriber e-mail message with

circulation exceeding 500. He misspells words in each transmission," Rubin wrote. ‘‘It’s embarrassing."

Still others raved about the ease e-mail has brought to communication.

Now a student getting her master’s degree in Internet strategy, Cincinnati resident Carol Boyd was relieved to escape the ‘‘legendary one-page memo" she spent years perfecting during her nearly 30 years at Procter & Gamble.

‘‘Communication is less disciplined but Oh - what a timesaver!" Boyd wrote. ‘‘It’s amazing what my teacher can convey in a one-word e-mail that simply says, ‘Cool."’

Even Brown - who uses ellipses in some communication - says some shortcuts can give an air of informality that is perfectly acceptable ‘‘provided that the person I’m writing to understands it." But he still tells students to err on the side of good grammar and spelling.

‘‘It’s their calling card," Brown says. ‘‘It’s how people judge them."

All,

Below are links to:

1) A e-zine story about a new transparent CD size disc, that has 10 layers, and stores 140 gigabytes of data. There is also no practical limit on the number of layers, just how many you want to include.

2) The company that is developing this technology. One of the financial backers on this is a prominant company making the hardware equipment used to make CD and DVD stampers used in the molding those discs.

http://www.3dhardware.net/features/dvdead/

http://www.c-3d.net/

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